

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 11

(By Senators Klempa, Yost, Edgell and Kessler (Acting President))

Authorizing the placement of a statue of the Honorable Francis Harrison Pierpont in Independence Hall in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Whereas, Francis Harrison Pierpont was born near Morgantown and grew up in Western Virginia in what is today Marion County and was linked with the region's history for the rest of his life; and

Whereas, Francis Harrison Pierpont graduated from Allegheny College and taught school in Virginia and Mississippi while also studying law. He was admitted to the bar in 1841 and became the local attorney for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1848; and

Whereas, Prior to entering politics Francis Harrison Pierpont also helped found Fairmont Male and Female Seminary, the forerunner to Fairmont State University; and

Whereas, Francis Harrison Pierpont was an active supporter of Abraham Lincoln and became involved in politics as an outspoken opponent of Virginia's secession from the Union. When Virginia seceded and entered the war, delegates from the northern and northwestern counties of Virginia, which refused to join the Confederacy, met at the Wheeling Convention. These counties established a separate government in Wheeling with Governor

1 Pierpont becoming the provisional governor; and

2 Whereas, Francis Harrison Pierpont headed the "restored
3 government of Virginia" that drafted a new Virginia Constitution
4 and sent representatives to the Union Congress. In 1862, he
5 attended the Loyal War Governors' Conference in Altoona,
6 Pennsylvania, which ultimately backed Abraham Lincoln's
7 Emancipation Proclamation and the continued Union war effort; and

8 Whereas, Under Francis Harrison Pierpont's leadership, the
9 Wheeling government called for a popular vote on the question of
10 the creation of a new separate state. Popular approval was
11 overwhelming and an application was subsequently made to Congress,
12 which also approved the issue. The new state took the name West
13 Virginia and was admitted into the Union on June 20, 1863; and

14 Whereas, Francis Harrison Pierpont became governor of the
15 "restored" state of Virginia, comprising the several Northern
16 Virginia, Norfolk area, and eastern shore counties under Union
17 control. The capitol of the restored state was established in
18 Alexandria for the remainder of the Civil War. At the end of the
19 war in 1865, President Andrew Johnson appointed Governor Pierpont
20 as the provisional governor of the reunited state of Virginia; and

21 Whereas, Francis Harrison Pierpont followed a policy of
22 forgiveness to those politicians who had served in the Confederate
23 military and government and became one of the key figures in the
24 Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1867-1868, which resulted in
25 the "Underwood Constitution" of 1869; and

1 Whereas, Francis Harrison Pierpont subsequently served one
2 term in the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1870 and his last
3 public office was as collector of Internal Revenue under President
4 James Garfield. After his retirement Governor Pierpont helped
5 create the West Virginia Historical Society before dying in
6 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on March 24, 1899. Today he rests at the
7 Woodlawn Cemetery in Fairmont beside his wife Julia and three of
8 his four children; and

9 Whereas, Francis Harrison Pierpont is known as the "Father of
10 West Virginia" and in recognition of his significance to our state
11 history, in 1910 the state donated a marble statue of Pierpont as
12 our second contribution to the United States Capitol's National
13 Statuary Hall Collection; therefore, be it

14 *Resolved by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

15 That the State Senate hereby authorizes the placement of a
16 full-sized statue of Francis Harrison Pierpont to be located in
17 Independence Hall in Wheeling, West Virginia. His eternal presence
18 will remind others of what one man, so dedicated, caring and
19 confident can do in the service of his fellow men and women; and,
20 be it

21 *Further Resolved,* That the statue is to be permanently placed
22 in Independence Hall in Wheeling, West Virginia in gratitude for
23 his service to the State of West Virginia and our great nation.